

IDAHO INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2006- June 30, 2011

Submitted this ____ day of July 2005

Thomas E. Limbaugh, Chairman

James F. Kile, Commissioner

R. D. Maynard, Commissioner

MISSION

To impartially and efficiently administer the Idaho Workers' Compensation Law in a manner that ensures compliance with insurance requirements, timely dispute resolution, and prompt and accurate benefit payments and quality vocational rehabilitation services for injured workers.

To provide timely and consistent judicial review of cases appealed from the Department of Labor under the Employment Security Law.

To assist innocent victims of crime recover from the traumatic effects of crime by providing financial assistance in accordance with state and federal law.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. The Compliance Department of the Industrial Commission continued its strong efforts in ensuring Idaho employers obtain the appropriate workers' compensation insurance. Compliance Investigators handled 5,400 cases, which was an increase of 10% over the prior fiscal year. Further, penalty collections to the Compliance Department were substantially increased.
2. The Crime Victims' Compensation Program successfully put through legislation to increase the funeral benefit level from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00, and expanded eligibility criteria to allow more victims access to family assistance benefits. This is the first benefit increase since the family assistance benefits were added in 1991.
3. The Twin Falls field office relocated to a new location to provide greater visibility and accessibility with a more professional atmosphere.
4. The Commission and the Industrial Commission Advisory Committee on Workers' Compensation made significant progress in educating legislators on the Idaho Workers' Compensation Law by holding training sessions specifically for the members of the Commerce and Human Resources Committees of both the House and Senate.
5. In an effort to streamline purchases and travel arrangements, the Commission converted to the use of a state-purchasing card. The Fiscal Department developed policies and procedures to assure adequate control over the use of the cards. In addition to streamlining the procedure, the Commission was able to close its rotary account in compliance with the State Treasurer's request.
6. The Commission interviewed applicants and provided a list of qualified finalists to the Department of Administration for the Idaho Special Indemnity Fund Manager.
7. The number of mediations increased by 21% over the previous fiscal year with an all time high percentage of full resolution of 91%.

8. Despite the increasing complexity of workers' compensation claims and the inherent difficulty in resolving these matters, the Adjudication Division and Commissioners continued to meet their goal of issuing decisions within 90 days from being submitted.
9. The Crime Victims recovery efforts exceeded \$466,000.00 for FY 2005. This is a 20% increase over the prior fiscal year's collections.
10. The Crime Victims' Compensation Program Manager successfully lobbied the Idaho legislature for two new positions, which will assist in processing claims and serving victims of crime.
11. The Fiscal Section completed 15 self-insured employer premium tax audits, which netted the Commission approximately \$65,000 in additional premium tax.
12. The Benefits Administration Bureau developed an Employer Education and Evaluation program, which they incorporated into their surety audits. The program advises employers of possible continuing liability due to unreported workers' compensation claims and ensures that claims are handled by the proper authorized in-state adjusting professionals.
13. Compliance staff worked with the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor and the State Tax Commission on enhancements to the on-line Idaho Business Registration System. The project received the outstanding IT Achievement Award in Digital Government Applications by Information Technology Resource Management Council.
14. In conjunction with the Rehabilitation Division, the Benefits Administration Bureau conducted six presentations encompassing 72 individual medical providers throughout the state. The presentations were designed to familiarize medical providers with the particular needs of the Idaho workers' compensation system, and therefore facilitate a smoother flow of pertinent information.
15. The Information Technology Department continued its work on the re-engineering project progressing on the completion of the Compliance system and beginning the Benefits Administration re-engineering project.
16. A new Regional Manager position was filled in North Idaho to take the place of a long-term employee that retired. The regional management team was re-structured to provide more cohesive leadership and consistent implementation of performance standards and services throughout the state.
17. Respectful workplace training was conducted by the Human Resources Department throughout the state.

CHALLENGES

1. The 2005 legislature tasked the Commission with establishing a medical fee schedule for physicians by January 2006 with an April 2006 implementation date. This will require considerable time and resources on a staff that is already stretched with their regular duties and responsibilities.
2. The Commission experienced a 15.3% turnover rate in FY05. This is due primarily to the low compensation rate for state employees.
3. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to recruit qualified applicants for state positions due to low salary levels and limited resources for incentives.
4. The Commission continues to adjust and reassign work responsibilities of two professional employees (one Referee and one Bureau Chief) that were deployed to Iraq. They are expected to return in early 2006.
5. Due to budgetary restraints for the past several years, the commission has not replaced computers and software, which has impacted our communication with external customers.
6. The Crime Victim Compensation Program is facing the uncertainty of funding levels due to proposed rescissions of VOCA funding outlined in the Presidential Budget Proposal for FY2007.
7. The Compliance Department will be dramatically impacted by the implementation of the 2005 Idaho Contractor Registration Act since one of the requirements for obtaining registration is to provide evidence of compliance with the Workers' Compensation Law. It is expected that 17,000 contractors will be registering, which will be checked by the Compliance Department and any claims of exemption will be validated by the department as well.
8. The Information Technology Department will continue their focus on the re-engineering project to convert current business systems to new technology prior to the end of 2006 when our technical support for the HP3000 ends.
9. Industry trends present unique challenges for the Rehabilitation Division, and have resulted in customer requests for more in-depth services, such as forensic labor market surveys.
10. Many key personnel at the Commission are reaching retirement age. Department managers need to focus on succession planning by developing internal staff and/or recruiting highly skilled employees when vacancies occur.
11. The Commission's current office in Boise lacks adequate client and employee parking, and has no room for agency growth.

GOAL #1

Promote a positive work environment that provides the necessary leadership, training, tools, and performance-based recognition to attract, retain, and cultivate a qualified, skilled workforce.

OBJECTIVES and Activities/Strategies

1. Create a work environment that promotes and rewards innovation, preserves accountability and respect for the law, puts the needs of customers first whether internal or external, and provides employees with the feeling of pride, recognition, and personal accomplishment.
 - Ensure job descriptions of each position identify responsibilities and expectations of the job, and that performance evaluations clearly establish performance objectives that challenge employees' skills. (Ongoing)
 - Provide training that will develop basic skills in the area of customer service to all Industrial Commission employees. (Annually)
 - Ensure positions have desk/procedure manuals that supply information needed by employees to accomplish the responsibilities of their individual jobs. (March 2007)
 - Conduct ongoing surveys of internal and external customers to assure issues are identified and that services are meeting customer needs. (Annually)
 - Conduct regular orientation programs to familiarize new employees with the Industrial Commission mission, vision, and the operation and interdependence of individual sections of the Commission. (Every 4 months)
 - Explore and develop opportunities to cross train staff on department functions and challenge staff through project assignments. (Ongoing)
2. Provide training that meets the specific needs of Industrial Commission staff. This training will include supervisory subjects and will be tailored to individual work-group and locality needs.
 - Develop annual agency and departmental training plans that identify specific training goals for Commission employees and departments. These plans will focus on teamwork, customer service, communicating the Commission's mission, the interrelationship of work group activities, and will include a focus on the use of technology. (March 1 of each year)
 - Provide Commission Managers with departmental training budgets that allow them the opportunity to focus training on individual and departmental needs and increase overall accountability. (July 30 of each year)
 - Develop a comprehensive agency security and disaster recovery plan. (December 2007)

GOAL #2

Assure that adequate procedures and rules exist and are enforced to accomplish the Commission's mission and provide training and supportive information to assure external participants in the workers' compensation system are aware of and understand their responsibilities and the consequences of non-compliance.

OBJECTIVES and Activities/Strategies

1. Establish a physician fee schedule in accordance with HB331 and communicate the schedule and plan for implementation throughout the state. (January 2006)
2. Review and update administrative rules pertaining to the approval and monitoring of insurance companies and self-insured employers by the Commission. (August 2006)
3. Provide the Commission's external customers with training on pertinent statutes and administrative rules. (Ongoing)
4. Provide educational materials and training programs designed for small employers explaining the coverage requirements of the Workers' Compensation Law. (Ongoing)
 - Develop outreach programs for employers, workers, insurance agents, accountants, and bookkeepers on the coverage requirements of the workers' compensation law and penalties for non-compliance. (June 2006)

GOAL #3

Through the use of technology, maximize staff efficiency and streamline the exchange of information between internal and external customers in the workers' compensation system, and the crime victims compensation program.

OBJECTIVES and Activities/Strategies

1. Enhance and expand the capabilities of the Industrial Commission in the area of e-government, including the effective use of the Internet, electronic payments, and electronic transfer of information.
 - Prioritize technological needs in future budgetary requests. (July 2005)
 - Continue to enhance the Commission's presence on the Internet through a user-friendly webpage. (Ongoing)
 - Expand electronic receipt of information and payment. (June 2006)

2. Standardize the Commission's record retention systems in a manner that will reduce processing time and prevent the accumulation of unnecessary information.
 - Establish record retention standards to include retention time lines, storage methods, and approval processes for the disposal of unnecessary documents. (November 2005)